

Town of Webster
Office of Select Board
945 Battle Street
Webster, NH 03303
Final Minutes – August 15, 2016
Approved August 29, 2016

Staff Present: Bruce Johnson, Michael Borek, Nanci Schofield, Wendy Pinkham, Phil Mitchell, Emmett Bean and Leslie Palmer

Public Present: Tara Gunnigle, Gordon Welch, Mike Jette, John Clark

Chairman Johnson opened the meeting at 6:30 PM at the Old Webster Meeting House with the following opening remarks:

Welcome also to the Old Webster Meeting House. The House is 225 years old this year.

This building, built by local craftsmen in 1791, is one of a small group of eighteenth century meeting houses that has retained its original form. It was originally called the Westerly Meeting House. Residents on the westerly part of the Town of Boscawen complained about having to travel 5 miles or more to the Town's only meeting house. Voters then voted to erect a second meeting house for the convenience of those living in the westerly part of town. Today, the building is an historical museum. To honor this building, and to honor Old Home Day, the Webster Select Board is meeting here tonight.

The Board signed the following for Administrative Assistant Leslie Palmer:

- The Select Board signed the ZBA Alternate appointment of Ron Leland which was approved at the previous meeting. The Board also approved and signed the ZBA appointment letter of Dee Blake as Member of the ZBA. Chairman Johnson moved to appoint Normandie Blake as a Member of the ZBA. Selectman Borek seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion was approved.
- The contract with Agera Energy will be renewed for another 12 months. Following a review of competing electricity providers, Agera continues to offer the lowest fixed rate of \$0.0817.
- The Select Board reviewed a request for funding by the Merrimack Advocacy Center, to be considered further during upcoming budget work sessions.
- Administrative Assistant Palmer provided the Select Board with drought information prepared by the NH Department of Environmental Services. The drought status of Merrimack County, along with surrounding counties, is considered "severe." Drought guidance for private well owners as well as efficiency tips and guidance has been added to the Town of Webster website on the Emergency Management page.
- The first meeting of the Local Emergency Operations Plan Committee will be held at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, August 16th. Work to update the LEOP is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The Board signed the following for Financial Administrator Wendy Pinkham:

- The Select Board signed the payroll and accounts payable manifests.
- Administrator Pinkham provided the Board with a copy of the budget to date. Budget work sessions will begin in October with alternating Monday work sessions. Updated budgets will be provided to department heads in mid-September to be followed by department head reports in mid-October. Chairman Johnson asked that departments have inventories available by Town Meeting.

Fire Chief Emmett Bean presented or advised the Board of the following:

- 9 calls for service in the last two weeks.
- Fire Chief Bean attended the recent Forest Fire meeting in Canterbury; the State Police Bomb Squad provided training and Smokey the Bear's 72nd birthday was celebrated.
- The NH Forest Fire Association reported that the State hasn't been this dry since 1995.
- A good turnout continues for Wednesday night Fire Department trainings. Fire Chief Bean expressed appreciation for his staff.

Road Agent Emmett Bean presented or advised the Board of the following:

- Ditching was completed on Roby Rd and Clough-Sanborn Rd.
- Roads throughout Town will be graded once we receive some rain.
- Granite State Minerals was awarded the State bid for salt. Road Agent Bean has a back-up source in Newport if needed.
- The surveyor was at Bashan Hollow Rd last week; work to the road can start now. The culvert work will begin once the wetland permit has been approved.

- Gordon Welch asked for an update on an issue brought to light in the last Select Board meeting. A resident had expressed concern that a rock wall on her property was moved during recent road work and was worried her boundary markers were affected. The plan at that time was for Chairman Johnson and Road Agent Bean to meet with the property owner at the property to look at the work done. Chairman Johnson replied to Mr. Welch that as a result of that meeting it was determined that the rock wall was, in fact, not touched by the recent road work and boundary markers were not moved. Mr. Welch believes that Road Agent Bean is owed an apology since it was determined that he did nothing wrong but was accused of it in the last meeting. Chairman Johnson confirmed that all of the road work completed on scenic roads recently falls well within the State RSAs that define work on scenic roads. He also acknowledged that it is difficult to balance the concerns of the public with necessary road maintenance. Mr. Welch suggested that the Select Board get together with department heads to “put out fires” before they get out of hand.
- Selectwoman Schofield asked that engineer Erin Darrow contact Road Agent Bean with an update on the Clothespin Bridge project.
- Discussion continued on the Class VI portion of Mutton Rd that needs culvert work. The option of creating an Emergency Lane was mentioned which would allow for the road work. Road Agent Bean will provide a list of such roads throughout Town which could also be considered Emergency Lanes.

Chairman Johnson asked if there was any new information regarding the use of impact fees at Town Hall. Administrative Assistant Palmer indicated that she is still waiting for a quote for the purchase of telephones from TDS.

Public Comment:

- Tara Gunnigle asked if the purchase of solar panels will go out to bid. Chairman Johnson responded that it already has and that the proposal brought forward by the Energy Committee was the one chosen after a review of several. She also asked about the Police Chief search. Chairman Johnson replied that candidates have been interviewed by the Oral Board and will be interviewed by the Select Board soon.
- Roy Fanjoy asked if there have been any more break-ins. Interim Chief Mitchell replied that there have not been anymore. Mr. Fanjoy also asked about efforts to hire a part time officer. Interim Chief Mitchell responded that he has reached out to area Towns to gauge interest and has drafted an advertisement which he will be providing for Select Board review.
- John Clark expressed appreciation that the Select Board is following proper procedure but urged the Board hire a new Chief immediately to maintain the quality of the community, referencing recent burnouts that make the town look “trashy.” He also referred to the need to now fill another full time position as well as that of a part time officer.
- Emmett Bean asked how many applications were received for the part time Police Chief position. Because the hiring process is ongoing, Chairman Johnson did not indicate the number of applications but confirmed that applications have been brought forward for Select Board interview.
- Based on John Clark’s earlier comment, Gordon Welch asked if the Town is down to only one officer. Chairman Johnson confirmed that Interim Chief Mitchell is the one officer available. The need for patrols on Rt.127 and the side roads was discussed. Selectwoman Schofield confirmed plans to use the speed sign soon at various locations in Town.
- Mike Jette described recent work to his property which will be completed soon. In order to protect the property and ultimately the Town, he has posted his property. He wanted to let the Select Board know in the event that the Town receives angry phone calls from residents about the posting. Mr. Jette offered to speak with anyone questioning the posting. Road Agent Bean confirmed that posting was necessary to re-stabilize the property noting that the erosion problem is very serious especially with the recent low water levels.

Action Items:

- Mike will update the Personnel Policy
- Wendy will provide updated budgets to department heads, mid-September
- Emmett will look into the costs associated with work needed on Chadwick Hill
- Emmett will develop a list of roads to be considered Emergency Lanes
- Leslie will contact Erin Darrow to have her follow-up with Emmett regarding the Clothespin Bridge project
- Leslie will follow up again with TDS about phone purchase, with a focus on Town Hall only

At 7:22 PM, Selectman Borek made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Selectwoman Schofield and approved.

Respectfully Submitted, Leslie M. Palmer